

## CONSTITUTION

## AND

## DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

### CHURCH COVENANT

**H**AVING, AS WE TRUST, BEEN BROUGHT BY DIVINE GRACE TO REPENT AND BELIEVE IN THE LORD Jesus Christ and to give up ourselves to Him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully renew our covenant with each other.

**W**e will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**W**e will walk together in brotherly love, as becomes the members of a Christian Church, exercise an affectionate care and watchfulness over each other and faithfully admonish and entreat one another as occasion may require.

**W**e will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor neglect to pray for ourselves and others.

**W**e will endeavor to bring up such as may at any time be under our care, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends.

**W**e will rejoice at each other's happiness and endeavor with tenderness and sympathy to bear each other's burdens and sorrows.

**W**e will seek, by Divine aid, to live carefully in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and remembering that, as we have been voluntarily buried by baptism and raised again from the symbolic grave, so there is on us a special obligation now to lead a new and holy life.

**W**e will work together for the continuance of a faithful evangelical ministry in this church, as we sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines. We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

**W**e will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

**May** the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.

## ARTICLE I - ORGANIZATION

This organization shall be known as the FERGUSON AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH, INC. located at 10050 Ferguson Avenue, Savannah, Georgia 31406, U.S.A.

## ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

The purpose of this Church shall be to glorify God through weekly worship and prayer, the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, the regular administration of the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, focused efforts to win the lost and building up the saints in faith, and supporting the spread of the gospel in all the earth.

## ARTICLE III-DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

### *I. Of the Scriptures,*

We believe that the Holy Bible as originally written:

- (a) Was verbally inspired and the product of God through Spirit controlled men. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 2 Peter 1:19-21; Acts 1:16, 28:25)
- (b) Is Truth without admixture of error. (Psalm 119:105, 130, 160; Luke 24:25-27, 44, 45; John 17:17)
- (c) Shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme authority by which all human conduct, creed and opinions should be tried; and that men in their relationships with God must move from truth to experience and not from experience to truth. (2 Timothy 3:16, 17; Matthew 7:21-23; Psalm 119:89; Proverbs 30:5, 6; Romans 3:4; 1 Peter 1:23; Revelation 22:19; John 12:48; Isaiah 8:7-11; John 1:45-47; John 5:39)

(Clarification)

- 1. By "THE HOLY BIBLE" we mean that collection of sixty-six books from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written, does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but is the very Word of God.
- 2. By "INSPIRATION" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by Holy Men of Old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be.

### *II. Of the True God,*

We believe:

- (a) That there is only one living and true God, infinite in every excellence, Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and Earth, inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all worship, confidence, and love. (Exodus 15:11, 20:2, 3; Revelation 4:11)
- (b) That in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, equal in every Divine perfection and executing distinct but harmonious offices. (Matthew 28:19; John 15:26; 1 Corinthians 12:4-6; Ephesians 2:18; 2 Corinthians 3:14)

(c) In the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. Concerning Him, we believe:

(1) In His Absolute Deity, that He was Divine as no other man can be, being Very God of Very God, existing for all eternity and co-equal with the Father and the Spirit. (John 1:1-3; Colossians 2:8-10; Hebrews 1:2, 3, 8; Micah 5:2)

(2) That God the Father created the heavens and the earth according to his own will, through his Son Jesus Christ, by whom all things continue to exist and operate. (John 1:3; Col.1:15-17; Heb. 1:2)

(3) That at His incarnation He was miraculously begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary as no other man was or can ever be born. (Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; John 1:14)

(4) That at his incarnation he became fully man but remained fully God. (Phil.2:5-8; Col. 2:9)

(Our Lord Jesus Christ's WORK in Atonement is seen in VI.)

(d) Of the Holy Spirit, we believe:

(1) That He is a Divine Person, equal with God the Father and God the Son, and of the same nature. (John 14:16, 17, 26; Matthew 28:19; Hebrews 9:14)

(2) That He was active in creation. (Genesis 1:1-3)

(3) That in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled. (2 Thessalonians 2:7)

(4) That He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness. (John 16:8-11)

(5) That He bears witness to and empowers the truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony. (John 15:26, 27; Acts 5:30-32)

(6) That His purpose in this age is to glorify the Son. (John 16:14; 1 Cor. 12:3)

(7) That He is the agent of the New Birth. (John 3:5, 6)

(8) That He indwells, seals, baptizes, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps believers until the day of redemption. (Ephesians 1:13, 14, 4:30; John 14:26, 16:13; Acts 11:16; Romans 8:9, 14, 16; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2; Romans 8:26, 27)

(9) That He never depreciates the completeness that is in Jesus Christ by exalting anyone or anything above or as an addition to Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:3; Colossians 2:10)

(10) That He gives to the believer, at salvation, gifts of service according to His will (1 Corinthians 12:11) and to be used only for the edification of the body. (1 Corinthians 13:5b; Ephesians 4:16)

### **III. Of the Devil, or Satan,**

We believe that Satan is a distinct personality who:

- (a) Was once holy and enjoyed Heaven's honors, but, through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell. (Isaiah 14:12-13; Ezekiel 28:15-17)
- (b) Drew after him a host of angels. (Revelation 12:9; Jude 6; 2 Peter 2:2; John 14:30)
- (c) Is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. (1 Thessalonians 3:5; Matthew 4:1-3)
- (d) Is the enemy of God and His Christ. (Zechariah 1:3; 1 John 3:8; Matthew 13:25, 37-39; Luke 22:3, 4)
- (e) Is the accuser of the Saints. (Revelation 12:10)
- (f) Is the author of all false religions, the chief power promoting the present apostasy. (2 Corinthians 11:13-15; Mark 13:21, 22)
- (g) Although powerful and to be respected, is not omniscient, omnipotent, nor omnipresent and cannot overcome the believer who is submitting in obedience to Jesus Christ and His Word in Faith. (James 4:7; 1 John 4:4)
- (h) Is destined to find defeat at the hands of God's Son, through His death on the cross (Genesis 3:15; Revelation 19:11, 16, 20; Revelation 12:7-9; 20:1-3), and is destined to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels. (Revelation 20:10-15; Matthew 25:41)

### **IV. Of the Creation,**

We believe in the Genesis account of creation, and:

- (a) That it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically nor figuratively. (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11; Acts 4:24; Colossians 1:17; Hebrews 11:3; John 1:3; Revelation 10:6; Romans 1:20; Acts 17:23-26; Jeremiah 10:10)
- (b) That man was created directly by God and in God's own image and after His own likeness. (Genesis 1:27; 1 Corinthians 11:7)
- (c) That man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, nor development through long periods of time from lower to higher forms. (Genesis 2:7, 21-23; John 1:3)
- (d) That all animal and vegetable life was created directly and to reproduce "after its own kind." (Genesis 1:11, 24; Colossians 1:16, 17)

### **V. Of Man and His Fall,**

We believe:

- (a) That man was created in innocence. (Genesis 1:27)
- (b) That by voluntary transgression he fell from his sinless and happy state. (Genesis 3; Romans 5:12, 19)

(c) That consequently, all men are now sinners by inheritance from Adam and by individual choice, and until regenerated are dead in sin and are subject to the wrath of God. (Ephesians 2:1-3; Romans 3:10-13)

(d) That all men are by nature utterly void of the righteousness required by the law of God, and definitely inclined to evil and are hopelessly lost. (Romans 3:11; Galatians 3:22; Ephesians 2:1-3; Psalm 40:12)

(e) That man is under just condemnation without defense or excuse. (Romans 3:9-20, 23; Romans 1:19, 20, 2:1, 12-15)

(f) That man's only hope of eternal life is through redemption in Jesus Christ. (John 3:3, 5; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Galatians 3:26)

## **VI. Of Christ's Atonement For Sin,**

We believe:

(a) That the salvation of sinners is wholly of God's grace (Ephesians 2:8, 9; Acts 15:11; Romans 3:24, 25); and through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, who by appointment of the Father, voluntarily took upon Him the form of a man, was tempted in all points as we are yet without sin in nature or deed, honored the Divine Law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins. (John 3:16; Matthew 18:11; Philippians 2:7, 8; Hebrews 2:14, 4:15; Romans 3:25; 1 John 4:10; Isaiah 53:6; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21)

(b) That His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a Martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. (John 10:18; Philippians 2:8; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:24; Isaiah 53:11; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 3:18)

(c) That, having risen bodily from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His Wonderful Person the tenderest sympathies with Divine Perfection, He is in every way the suitable, compassionate, all sufficient Savior and the mediator for His believer priests. (Isaiah 53:12; Hebrews 7:25, 9:12-15, 10:10, 12, 14, 18; 1 John 2:2)

(d) That the blessings of this atonement are given to all who believe from the heart and confess to God this Lord and Savior as his own Lord and Savior. It is the immediate duty of man to obey the command to accept this offer of mercy. (Acts 17:30; Romans 10:8, 9, 10)

## **VII. Of Salvation By Grace,**

We believe:

(a) That salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of his shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works. (John 1:12; Eph. 1:4-7; 2:8-10; 1 Peter 1:18,19)

(b) That in order to be saved, all men must be born again. (John 3:3; Galatians 3:26)

(c) That the new birth is a New Creation in Christ Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:17)

(d) That it is instantaneous, and not a lengthy process. (John 3:5-7; Acts 16:30-33)

(e) That in the new birth, the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made partaker of the Divine Nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God. (2 Peter 1:4; Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:1, 4-9; Colossians 2:13; Titus 3:5)

(f) That the new creation is brought about in a manner above comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of The Holy Spirit in connection with Divine Truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience by faith in the Gospel. (John 1:12, 13, 3:8)

(g) In God's electing grace and that this does not contradict or negate the responsibility of man to repent and trust Christ as Savior and Lord (Ezek. 18:23, 32; 33:11; John 3:18, 19, 36; 5:40; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12; Colossians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:2; Rev. 22:17)

(h) That salvation is freely offered to all by the Gospel. (Romans 10:9-13; Revelation 22:17)

(i) That it is the immediate duty of all to accept this salvation by whole-hearted, penitent and obedient faith. (John 3:15-18; 1 Timothy 1:15; Acts 2:37-41; Romans 10:8, 9)

(j) That nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the Gospel. (John 3:18, 36; Romans 1:18, 20, 2:1, 4, 5)

(k) That its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith in the finished work and Person of Jesus Christ and newness of life. (Romans 10:8-10; 1 John 5:1-5)

### **VIII. Of Justification,**

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is justification, and :

(a) That justification includes the pardon of sin, the imputation of Christ's righteousness and the gift of eternal life on the basis of Christ's righteousness and atonement. (Acts 13:39; Isaiah 53:11; Romans 5:1, 9, 8:1)

(b) That it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness, which we have done or ever will do, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood is His righteousness imputed to us. (Titus 3:5-7; Romans 4:24, 25, 5:1, 17; Galatians 3:11)

### **IX. Of Repentance and Faith,**

We believe that repentance and faith:

(a) Are inseparable graces. (Mark 1:15)

(b) Are solemn obligations. (Acts 20:21)

(c) Are wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God who convicts the believer of guilt, danger, helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, so that the believer turns to God with unfeigned contrition, and confesses to God his wholehearted faith in the work and person of the Lord Jesus Christ as his all sufficient Savior. (Acts 2:27, 28; Romans 10:9-13)

### **X. Of Sanctification,**

We believe that Biblical Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, the believer is set apart from sin, unto Christ, and has three aspects:

(a) The believer has been set apart positionally before God the moment he believes. (1 Corinthians 1:30, 6:11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 10:10, 14)

(b) The believer is being set apart progressively in his walk day by day as he grows in grace toward the likeness of Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit in the continual use of the appointed means, especially the Word of God, self-examination, watchfulness, prayer and yielding to the Spirit through Biblical change. (John 17:17; Romans 8:13; 2 Peter 3:18; Romans 8:28, 29a; 2 Corinthians 7:1; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 4:7b; Hebrews 5:12-14; 1 John 3:3; Romans 12:1, 2; Ephesians 4:22, 24)

(c) The believer is to be set apart prospectively from the very presence of sin when his sanctification is completed at the coming of Christ for the church. (1 John 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 3:13, 5:23)

### **XI. Of the Security of the Believer or Perseverance of the Saints.**

We believe this is the design of God's Divine Plan:

(a) That every person, immediately upon acceptance of Christ as personal Savior and Lord receives eternal life and is made at once a Son of God. (1 John 5:11-13; John 1:12)

(b) That believers are kept by the power of God through faith, are kept in a state of grace, and are eternally secure apart from any human works.

(c) That such only are believers who endure to the end. (Philippians 1:6; John 8:31; Revelation 21:7, 8; Ephesians 2:10)

(d) That the believers' persevering attachment to Christ and His own, and their growth in the likeness of Christ are God's marks which distinguish them from superficial professors. (Romans 8:28, 29a; John 14:21-23; John 10:27-29; 1 John 2:19; 5:1-3; John 13:34, 35; Ephesians 2:10, Titus 2:11-13; James 2:14-20)

### **XII. Of the Church.**

We believe:

(a) That the church universal is a New Testament institution, established by Jesus Christ, who is its sole Head; revealed through the apostles; empowered and perpetuated by the Holy Spirit; His "body" for service and His "bride" for glory. It began with the New Testament Saints at Pentecost and will be consummated at the coming of Christ in the Rapture. (Matthew 16:18; Acts 1:8, 2:1-13, 41-47, 15:14; Ephesians 1:22, 23, 3:21, 5:23-32; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18)

(b) That the church universal is manifested through the local church which is:

(1) A congregation of baptized believers, associated together by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel. (Acts 2:41, 42)

(2) Observing the ordinances of Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:2)

(3) Governed by His laws. (Ephesians 1:22, 23)

(4) Exercising the gifts, responsibilities and privileges invested in them by His work. (Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Corinthians 12:4,8,11)

(c) That its scriptural offices are those of pastors (elders or bishops), and deacons whose qualification, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the Scriptures. (Acts 14:23, 6:5, 6, 15:23, 20:17-28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:1-7, 8-13)

(d) That the true mission of the church is expressed in the New Testament and abbreviated in Matthew 28:19, 20 and Ephesians 4:11-16.

..To make individual disciples.

..To baptize them into a properly organized and functioning local church.

..To teach them to obey His Word as He has commanded. This includes assisting parents in teaching truth.

(e) That the local church has the absolute right of self-government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ, through the Holy Spirit's direction by the Word. (Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23, 24; 1 Peter 5:1-4)

(f) That it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel and that each local church is the sole judge of the measure and method of its cooperation. (Acts 15:22; Jude 2, 3; 2 Corinthians 8:23, 24; 1 Corinthians 16:1-3)

(g) That on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, and of benevolence, the will of the local church following the Word of God is final. (Malachi 3:10; Leviticus 27:32; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13)

### **XIII. Of the Ordinances.**

We believe:

(a) That Christian Baptism is:

(1) The immersion in water of a believer. (Acts 8:36-39; Matthew 3:6; John 3:23; Romans 6:4, 5; Matthew 3:16)

(2) In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

(3) To show forth in a solemn testimony and picture of our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life. (Romans 6:3, 5; Colossians 2:12)

(b) That the Lord's Supper is the commemoration of our Lord's death until He comes, by the sacred use of broken bread and the freshly pressed juice of the vine as symbols of the price He paid for us. This commemoration should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. (1 Corinthians 11:23-28)

### **XIV. Of the Righteous and the Wicked.**

We believe:

(a) That there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked. (Galatians 3:22, 26; Genesis 18:23; Romans 6:17, 18; 1 Peter 4:18; Proverbs 11:31)



(b) That those (through faith), justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified or set apart by the Spirit of our God are truly righteous in their standing before God. (Romans 1:17; 1 Corinthians 15:22; John 5:24; Romans 3:22-24, 4:22-24; Ephesians 1:6, 7)

(c) That all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and are under the curse. (1 John 5:19; Galatians 3:10; Romans 6:23, 7:5)

(d) That this distinction holds among men both before and after death, in the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost. (Matthew 25:34, 41, 46; Luke 9:26, 16:25, 26; John 8:21; Romans 6:23; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 20:10-15)

#### **XV. Of Civil Government.**

We believe:

(a) That civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society. (Romans 13:1-7; 2 Samuel 23:3; Exodus 18:21, 22)

(b) That magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed (Matthew 22:21; 1 Timothy 2:1, 2; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13, 14, 17; Daniel 1:8-15), except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 4:19, 20, 5:29; Daniel 3:17, 18, 6:10, 11), who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth. In this connection we stand firmly for the separation of the church and state. (Matthew 10:28, 22:21, 23:10; Revelation 11:16; Philippians 2:10, 11; Psalm 72:11)

#### **XVI. Of the Family.**

We believe:

(a) That marriage of a man to a woman is the plan of God and sacred in His sight. (Genesis 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-9; Ephesians 5:18-32; 1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12; Malachi 2:13, 14)

(b) That the roles of husband, wife, parent, and child are clearly defined in Scripture. (Ephesians 5:21-32; Colossians 3:16-21; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

(c) That sexual relationships are sacred and fulfilling only within the bonds of marriage, and are condemned outside the marriage relationship. (1 Corinthians 7:3, 4; Hebrews 13:4)

(d) That children are a blessing of God and the responsibility for them rests solely upon the parent and they are to be brought up in loving structured control and conscientious instruction in the truths of God and His principles of life. (Psalm 127:3; Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; Psalm 78:4-7; Proverbs 22:6; Proverbs 17:6)

#### **XVII. Of the Resurrection, Return of Christ, and Related Events.**

We believe in and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their full and face value. These beliefs include:

(a) Christ's bodily resurrection from the tomb. (Matthew 28:6, 7; Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Corinthians 15:4-8; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-6; Acts 2:24, 32, 3:15, 4:2; Romans 4:25)

(b) His ascension to the Father's right hand. (Acts 1:9, 11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Hebrews 10:12)

- (c) His future appearing in the air to receive His saints. (1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17; Acts 1:11; Hebrews 9:28)
- (d) The resurrection of the righteous dead. (1 Thessalonians 4:16; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44, 15:52)
- (e) The physical change of the living in Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:51-53; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Philippians 3:20, 21)
- (f) The believer's response to God's Word will be evaluated at the Judgment Seat of Christ for reward or loss. (2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:11-15; Romans 14:10; 2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:2)
- (g) Christ's bodily return to the earth. (Matthew 24:29-32; Luke 1:32; Isaiah 9:6, 7; Acts 2:29, 30; 1 Corinthians 15:25; Isaiah 32:1, 11:4, 5; Psalm 72:8; Revelation 20:1-4, 6)
- (h) The White Throne Judgment of the unsaved, and the new heaven and the new earth. (Revelation 20:11-15, 21:1, 2)

## ARTICLE IV - BY-LAWS

### A. MEMBERSHIP

1. To qualify for membership in this Church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized, in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must agree to submit to the teaching of scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The Elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence, as the Elders deem appropriate.
2. To be admitted into Church membership, applicants shall be ordinarily, but not necessarily, recommended by the Elders for admission after their completion of the application and membership interview and must be accepted by vote of the members at any regular or special meeting of the members, and shall at that point relinquish their membership in other churches.
3. In accord with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the Church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only those shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the Church who are members of this Congregation; non-members may serve on an ad-hoc basis with the approval of the Elders. Notwithstanding, non-members may serve the Church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ this Congregation is governed by and composed of its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on the election of officers, on decisions regarding membership status, and on such other matters as may be submitted to a vote.

4. Baptism will be administered to a candidate for membership who is recommended to the Congregation and who meets the above qualifications for membership (excluding baptism). At any regular or special meeting of the Church, a majority vote of the members present is required for a candidate to be admitted for baptism. The candidate will then be baptized at the Church's earliest convenience and will become a member upon receiving baptism.
5. Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the Church and/or rendering doubtful a profession of faith, shall be subject to the admonition of the Elders and the discipline of the Church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18: 15-17 and the example of scripture.

Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed. Church discipline can include admonition by the Elders or Congregation, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18: 15–17; 1 Timothy 5: 19– 20; 1 Corinthians 5: 4–5).

6. Any member who does not attend the services and who does not contribute toward the support of the Church for an extended period of time, unless showing sufficient reason therefore will be subject to termination of membership by a 2/3 vote of the members present at a called congregational meeting.
7. The Church shall recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her death, and it shall also recognize the termination of a person's membership following his or her self-professed apostasy as confirmed by vote of members present at a called congregational meeting. Additionally, the Church may recognize the termination of a person's membership after he or she has voluntarily resigned or joined with another church. Membership may also be terminated as an act of Church discipline (ordinarily, but not necessarily, at the recommendation of the Elders) upon the vote of at least two-thirds of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. The Church shall have authority to refuse a member's voluntary resignation or transfer of membership to another church, either for the purpose of proceeding with a process of Church discipline, or for any other biblical reason.

## B. GOVERNMENT

1. The government of this Church, under God, shall be of a congregational type, i.e., that the autonomy of the local Church shall be believed in and practiced, and that the local body of believers shall conduct its own internal affairs, carry on its own business and discipline its own members bowing to no other authority save God's Holy Word as led and directed by the Holy Spirit. This local Church is an independent body, and will not be bound by any recommendation, or resolution handed down by any higher ecclesiastical authority.
2. The government of this Church, under God, shall be committed to an official council of ordained Elders and an official board of ordained Deacons serving for the local Congregation, who qualify according to I Timothy 3, each of who shall be a member of this Church and in complete accord with its doctrinal statement. Furthermore, those who are elected as Elders or Deacons must be spiritual men who maintain a good Christian testimony, refraining from sins such as drunkenness, violence, quarrels, and greed. Also, Elders and Deacons are expected to support the ministry of the Church with his giving. The Elder Council and the Board of Deacons shall be a body of worthwhile, ordained men, led by the Holy Spirit, and, who, living with the remainder of the people, shall lead them to love one another, attending all services possible. Each Elder and Deacon should also make a diligent effort to support the ministries of FABC in a conspicuous and sacrificial Christian manner.

### Council of Elders

#### 1. Duties of the Council of Elders shall be:

- a) The Elders are to give themselves over to prayer and the ministry of the Word.
- b) To watch over and care for the members of the Church, with special emphasis on their spiritual well-being but not neglecting the physical needs of the members.
- c) To supervise and coordinate the corporate worship of the Church.
- d) To assist the Pastor in the administration of the ordinances of Baptism and Communion.
- e) To recommend the receiving and dismissing of members to and from the Church.
- f) To oversee the public teaching of the Word and the existing ministries of the Church and to encourage the creation of new ministries.
- g) When deemed necessary to exercise Church discipline according to Matt. 18:15-18.
- h) The Elders shall be allowed to spend up to but not exceeding \$7,500 in a calendar month for any one action that includes benevolence, teaching supplies, and general ministry.

2. Fifty percent (50%) plus one, of the Council of Elders must be present for the transaction of all official business.
  - a) The Council of Elders shall not meet without the Pastor unless mutually agreed upon beforehand by both parties, or when the Church is in the process of obtaining a new pastor.
  - b) The Council of Elders shall be responsible to the Congregation and regularly provide reports to the Congregation. All of the Council's recommendations regarding membership shall be presented to the Congregation for approval.

#### The Board of Deacons

The duties of the Board of Deacons shall be:

1. To assist the Council of Elders in the caring for the members of the Church, both spiritually and physically.
2. To maintain the physical plant (all buildings and grounds) which, is to include all repairs, renovations and/or new building projects.
3. To assist the Elders with the ministries of the Church.
4. To assist the Pastor and Elders in the administration of the ordinances of the Church.
5. To perform other duties as assigned by the Council of Elders.
6. The Deacons shall be allowed to spend up to but not exceeding \$7,500 in a calendar month for any one action that includes alteration, modification, and improvement of all Church property.
7. The Deacons shall be allowed to spend up to but not exceeding \$15,000 for any single Emergency Action for a repair to the Church's real property, under circumstances when a decision cannot wait for congregational approval at a regular or special called meeting. The authorization for such Emergency Action must include, at minimum, the approval of three (3) Deacons and/or Elders. The Deacons must provide justification for use of each new Emergency Action at the next scheduled congregational meeting.
8. The Board of Deacons shall not meet without the Pastor unless mutually agreed upon beforehand by both parties, or when the Church is in the process of obtaining a new pastor.

#### C. BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A Board of Trustees shall be elected and/or removed by a 50% plus one vote of the Congregation, according to the laws of the State of Georgia, I Timothy 3, and shall be custodians of all Church properties, both real and personal, with the exception of monies deposited in banks by various treasurers. Their work shall be under the direction of the Congregation.

When authorized by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of a Members' meeting, the Trustees shall have power:

1. To take and hold by lease, gifts, purchase, grant, devise or bequest, any property, real or personal, necessary or desirable for attaining the objects and carrying into effect the purpose of the Church Corporation, subject, however, to any alternation or modification made by general law of the State of Georgia, the amount of real and personal property to be held by the Corporation.
2. To transfer and convey its real and personal property.
3. To borrow money for the purpose of the Church Corporation and issue bonds, therefore, and execute the same by mortgage.

The Board of Trustees shall be allowed to spend up to but not exceeding \$200.00 per quarter for alteration, modification and improvement of all Church property. An expenditure exceeding \$200.00 must be cleared through the Council of Elders and/or Board of Deacons, and passed on by the Congregation.

Any recommendation of major importance suggested by the Board of Trustees shall be presented to the Elders and Deacons for consultation, before it is presented to the Congregation for final action.

#### D. CHURCH RECORDS AND BOOKKEEPING

1. The Church shall keep complete and accurate minutes properly indexed of all business proceedings of this body.
2. The Church shall keep full and accurate accounts of general receipts and disbursements and shall deposit all monies in the name and to the credit of the Church and in such depositories as may be designated by the Council of Elders, Board of Deacons, or the Congregation. Disbursements of all funds shall be made as ordered by the Congregation. Accounting shall be rendered to the Council of Elders and Board of Deacons monthly. These shall be available for audit.

The records and books shall be considered Church property. These records, with the exception of those for personal envelope posting, shall be available for inspection by any Church member.

#### E. CONGREGATION

1. The voting membership of the Church (i.e., those eighteen (18) years of age and older), hereafter referred to as the Congregation, shall meet once each quarter on the third or fourth Sunday afternoon of each January, April, July, and October for the purpose of transacting any necessary business and recommendations brought by the Elders and/or Deacons. The date of each quarterly meeting will be announced by the 1st Sunday of each quarter. The reports of the various ministries of the Church shall also be heard.
2. The Council of Elders, and/or Board of Deacons may call special meetings of the Congregation when necessary. A minimum of 8 days notice shall be given to the Congregation. Special called meetings are limited to the stated purpose for which the meeting was called. This purpose must be given to the Congregation in written form when notification of meeting is given.
3. The Congregation present at a duly called business meeting shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of those present shall be required to pass any motion pertaining to the admission of new members, physical properties of the Church or expenditure of Church funds. A 2/3 vote of members present shall be required to terminate membership and to affirm new Deacons. Elders and pastoral staff will require 3/4 vote of affirmation, and 2/3 vote for termination.
4. The congregational meeting shall be chaired by a moderator under the general oversight of the Council of Elders.
5. The official membership of the Church shall be those persons included in the official Church Directory, updated with actions regarding membership undertaken at congregational meetings. The Church Office is responsible for maintaining the up-to-date Church Directory.

#### F. COMMITTEES

The Church may maintain active committees. These committees shall carry on their own work, manage their own affairs, and elect their own officers. They are, however, subordinate to the Council of Elders and/or their designate and shall be expected to work in harmony with the overall program of the Church and in full accord with its doctrinal statement.

#### G. PASTORAL RELATIONS

1. The Senior Pastor is the under shepherd of the flock and shall teach and train the Congregation as well as other officers. He shall not be the servant of the Council of Elders or the boss of the same, but its

leader. As leader of the Church, his position of leadership shall be assured unless there is sufficient reason to alter this position as leader.

2. To call a Senior pastor to serve the Church, a Pulpit Committee shall be led and appointed by the Council of Elders and shall include members of the Board of Deacons and Congregation. The Pulpit Committee shall select candidates for presentation to the Council of Elders, Board of Deacons and the Congregation. If approved by the Council of Elders and Board of Deacons, the candidate shall be presented to the Congregation for action. A three fourths (3/4) majority of the voting membership present shall be required to appoint a pastor. His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out for Elders.
3. The Senior Pastor shall have a spiritual oversight of the Church. All questions regarding the Senior Pastor's relationship to the Church shall be decided by the Council of Elders and, if necessary, brought before the Congregation. The Pulpit shall be under the care of the Senior Pastor, who shall recommend guest speakers and evangelists as the need may arise, and who shall be given the liberty to share the pulpit from time to time with visiting preachers, missionaries, and Christian workers with consent from the Council of Elders when it will be spiritually profitable for the Congregation. The Senior Pastor shall at no time give the Pulpit over to anyone who is unsound in doctrine as related to the doctrinal statement, or who is not in sympathy with the beliefs and practices. The Senior Pastor shall be an ex-officio member of all boards and committees within the framework of the Church.
4. A pastor's services may be terminated by either party (Pastor or Church) subject to thirty (30) days notice and compensation. Any action concerning the termination of the Pastor's services shall ordinarily come through the Council of Elders and Board of Deacons, in turn passed to the Congregation for final action. See "Congregation: Bullet #3).
5. The Church may call additional pastors whose relationship to the Senior Pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an Elder. He shall perform the duties of an Elder described above, and shall be recognized by the Church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall not be subject to the triennial reaffirmation or to the term limitation set out for Elders. He shall assist the Senior Pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of Pastor, or as set forth in the Constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the Congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the Senior Pastor for defined periods of time, the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the Council of Elders.

## **ARTICLE V – Election Procedures**

Procedure for election of Elders and Deacons:

1. Church body will pray before considering anyone.
2. Elder/Deacon Terms
  - a. Elder terms will last for 3 years with an option to succeed themselves for one consecutive term if nominated and reaffirmed by the Congregation.
  - b. Deacon terms will last for 3 years with an option to succeed themselves for one consecutive term under extenuating circumstances if nominated and reaffirmed by the Congregation.
  - c. After an Elder/Deacon has served two consecutive three-year terms, he may only be elected to the office after at least a one-year hiatus.
3. The Church body will turn names of men they believe qualified to the Council of Elders.
4. Elders will pray and interview each man to ensure that he is qualified according to I Timothy.
5. After prayerful consideration the active Elders would present to the Church a list of spiritually qualified men who have been contacted, interviewed and have agreed to serve (if elected).
6. These names would be presented at the October quarterly Church meeting (or Special Called meeting). If there are no objections from the Church body there will be a called meeting one-month later to vote on and pass these recommendations.

## **ARTICLE VI**

By-law amendments or changes can come only after all active members have been notified by letter of the proposed change and the date of the meeting at which the vote to adopt said change will take place. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the voting members present is necessary to pass any proposed change.

Approved by congregation 07-13-2025